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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2016

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SUBJECT: (U) GUANTANAMO: POLOFFS MEET WITH MP'S AND
ACTIVISTS

REF: LONDON 1623

Classified By: PolMinCouns Maura Connelly; reason 1.4 (b, d)

11. (U) Action request - please see paragraph 3.

12. (C) At the request of Labour backbench MP Desmond Turner, Poloffs met August 22 with Turner and a group of activists to discuss Guantanamo. Most of the activists were campaigners on behalf of Guantanamo detainee Omar Deghayes, whose family lives in Turner's constituency. Poloffs met with Turner and some of the activists in March (reftel). Abu Baker Deghayes, Omar's brother, joined the meeting in progress. Two Liberal Democrat MPs who also have families in their constituencies with relatives at Guantanamo, Edward Davey and Sarah Teather, participated in a portion of the meeting. Apart from a lengthy exchange of views on Guantanamo generally, a few specific points emerged:

- The MPs involved, along with unnamed others who have a similar reason to be interested in Guantanamo, intend to submit through the Embassy a request to visit the detention facilities and meet with the detainees whose families live in their constituencies. (We understand that there are presently eight detainees at Guantanamo who have residency in the UK.) Turner allowed that if his group could not go, it would find it acceptable if some other delegation of MPs - such as members of the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) - were able to visit Guantanamo. (NOTE: We did not mention the planned FAC visit to Guantanamo next month, of which none of our interlocutors seemed aware. Nor did the LibDem MPs appear to know that their party leader Sir Menzies ("Ming") Campbell has asked to visit Guantanamo, despite the fact that he has announced it publicly. Campbell's Chief of Staff has told us that Campbell would like Teather and Davey to go, but would have them stay at home if that is a prerequisite for his own visit. Meanwhile, FCO tells us FAC Chairman Mike Gapes does not wish to make the September visit known publicly in advance, though he and FCO realize word may leak out as the time approaches. END NOTE.)

- A British physician expressed the intention to submit a similar request on behalf of British doctors, with a view to looking into the health of UK-resident detainees as well as the overall health-care situation at the detention facilities. Poloffs expressed willingness to pass such a request to the appropriate authorities, but gave him no reason to believe it would receive support.

- The doctor also asked for any public information regarding a January 2006 DoD survey in which the health-care situation at Guantanamo received a perfect score. He expressed particular concern about force-feeding of detainees in contravention to ICRC guidelines.

- Several activists asked for information on how to provide the Annual Review Boards with information that might help show that particular detainees should not be seen as enemy combatants.

- One activist, Jackie Chase of the Save Omar campaign, who also participated in the March meeting, asked for answers to the questions posed then (and relayed via reftel) regarding Omar Deghayes. (NOTE: Embassy has received no reply to reftel.)

13. (U) Action requested: We would be grateful for any response from the Department to any of the requests mentioned above.

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Johnson